

## **Chapter 9—Public Outreach and Participation**

### **Introduction**

### **About The Branch**

### **Branch Mission**

### **Existing Programs**

#### **School-based Activities**

#### **Outreach Activities**

### **Existing Goals**

### **CWCS Goals**

#### **Objectives**

#### *Strategies*

#### Measures

## **Chapter 9—Public Outreach and Participation**

### **Introduction**

The District of Columbia enjoys an ethnically diverse population of about 561,000 residents living on a land base of sixty-nine square miles. Developed land comprises 80%, forest or parkland is 7%, and surface water is 13%. It is a totally urban landscape with a wealth of opportunities and needs for public service, education, and outreach. Despite being urban a variety of aquatic and wildlife resources abounds in our rivers, creeks, streams and on our minimal land base.

### **About The Branch**

Established in 1986 as an Aquatic Resources Education Program, the program has advanced to a branch with multiple components to reach the local citizens of the District of Columbia.

The Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Education Branch provides a variety of educational and outreach opportunities to schools, community groups, and associations regardless of physical or mental giftedness. Age-appropriate curricula and activities have been designed to reach various target audiences. Additionally, each summer an eight-week hands-on angler education clinic program is provided for youth, teens, and senior citizens. Annual work plans highlight accomplishments and five-year work plans are created to anticipate requests for public services.

The overall mission of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division is to provide great customer satisfaction for the public by ensuring aquatic and wildlife education and outreach services are honestly, accurately and informatively represented to prevent environmental health disasters. An underlying principle of all activities will be to collaborate and form partnerships with federal and local governmental agencies, environmental groups, community groups, public schools, and other interested parties to improve the aquatic and wildlife resources status in the District of Columbia. Education and outreach strategies will include involvement with schools to empower urban youth to make better natural resources decisions. The key will be to involve residents and partners not only in education, but also informing and involving them in existing and future recreational aquatic and wildlife opportunities.

### **Branch Mission**

The Branch is dedicated to fostering a better understanding and appreciation of our local aquatic and wildlife resources by providing quality programs through education, conservation and outreach activities.

## **Existing Programs**

The Branch currently offers several educational, outreach, and recreational programs for its residents. They are the following:

### **School-based Activities**

#### ***General Fisheries Introduction***

- Information on fisheries management, the aquatic environment, and aquatic biota
- Focus on our three major urban waterways
- Provides insight about fish biologists and fish managers

#### ***Aquatic Ecology***

- Concentrates on the importance of water
- Types of water, aquatic ecosystems
- Aquatic organisms (both flora and fauna)
- Pollution and conservation

#### ***Chesapeake Bay***

- Chesapeake Bay's relationship to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers
- Provides a vocabulary builder
- Explains how habitats transition from one area to another

#### ***Fish Biology***

- Biology and behavior of fish
- Emphasis on local fish species
- Biological terms, fish anatomy, and fish locomotion

#### ***Water as an Environment***

- Water and humans place in the water cycle
- Fundamentals of water quality
- Pollution
- Facts about water use

#### ***Wetlands***

- Defines wetlands
- Functions of a wetland
- Identifies local wetlands and wetland areas
- Specialized plants of wetland habitats

#### ***Introduction to Urban Wildlife***

- Teaches about local wildlife
- Habitats and benefits of wildlife

### ***Birds of DC***

- Teaches about birds in the District
- Effects of urban environment on birds

### ***Living with Wildlife***

- Effect of urban ecosystem on wildlife
- How people and wildlife co-exist

### ***Staff persons also provide services for***

- Career Day Presentations
- Science Fair Judging

## **Outreach Activities**

- Educator Workshops
- Capital Geographic Newsletter
- Tackle Tribute Newsletter
- Kids Fishing Booklet
- Fishing Clinics

## **Existing Goals**

The Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Branch has transformed itself by making use of public involvement opportunities. Educational programs offer a variety of free public services ranging from written literature about the local natural resources, fishing clinics, and in-school programs to Internet access to educational activities to educator workshops. These successes have been some of the primary forces for this transformation. Technological advances coupled with effective and customer-friendly public services will ensure the residents and visitors to our nation's capital continue to enjoy the natural resource treasures that are managed, conserved, protected, and sustained for the benefit of a diverse urban population.

Equally important, the Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Branch must address the communications aspects of the division, to ensure the universal availability of basic resource and administrative services, make communications services accessible internally and externally, and inform consumers about our programs and management activities. The key will be to continue to involve residents and partners not only in education, but also informing and involving them in recreational aquatic and wildlife opportunities available in the District. In support of this mission, the Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Education Branch, has four general goals for the next 5 years. They are:

1. Enhance the District of Columbia youths' knowledge and understanding of urban aquatic and wildlife resources
2. Provide practical angling skills training to District residents

3. Provide practical wildlife skills training to District teachers
4. Increase public awareness concerning the Aquatic Resources Education Center

## **CWCS Goals**

1. Provide wildlife education and outreach to residents of the District

The Fisheries and Wildlife Division is committed to supporting and promoting the highest quality of public education and outreach services for residents and visitors as it pertains to our local aquatic and wildlife resources. It is our mission to provide great customer satisfaction for the public by ensuring aquatic and wildlife education and outreach services are honestly, accurately, and informatively represented to prevent environmental health disasters. An underlying principle of all efforts will be to improve the aquatic and wildlife resources status in the District of Columbia. Education and outreach strategies will include involvement of schools to empower urban youth to make better natural resource decisions. The key to success will be to involve residents and partners not only in education, but also informing and involving them in recreational aquatic and wildlife opportunities.

### *Key Objectives and Strategies for the CWCS Goal:*

#### **Objective 1. Enhance District youths' knowledge and understanding of urban aquatic and wildlife resources.**

##### *Strategies*

- Administer wildlife educational outreach programs in the District's public and private schools.
- Teach wildlife resources education principles to supplement and strengthen teachers' needs.
- Teach wildlife resources education principles specific to the District of Columbia
- Work with teachers to encourage and develop life skills for students

##### Measures

- Increase middle school and high school program participation.
- Enhance and create new aquatic and wildlife resources education curricula.

- Increase communications with science and mathematics teachers.
- Provide training and professional development for all aquatic and wildlife education staff persons, such as web page design, building budget skills, effective delivery of aquatic and wildlife education programs, presenting effective workshops, and fishing techniques and skills.

**Objective 2. Provide practical wildlife skills training to District teachers.**

*Strategies*

- Develop annual workshops on wildlife principles for teachers
- Involve District teachers in outdoor, interactive and hands-on wildlife activities
- Relate wildlife education activities to critical learning and developmental skills

Measures

- Acquire educational tools to implement a full wildlife education program.
- Provide training and professional development for teachers and develop and implement an evaluation tool to measure success of teacher or educator trainings.
- Increase communications with science and mathematics teachers to determine what critical skills needs to be addressed.

**Objective 3. Increase public awareness concerning the CWCS efforts within the District of Columbia.**

*Strategies*

- Provide community-based wildlife educational programs
- Promote resident and community involvement in wildlife skills and outreach opportunities
- Work effectively to increase public knowledge of local wildlife resources

Measures

- Increase outreach efforts to non-school based organizations to attract a larger segment of the public sector.
- Provide outdoor skills training, workshops and other types of

interactive and hands-on activities for individuals of these organizations.

- Increase communications with religious groups, senior citizens, garden clubs, youth organizations, daycare, and other such similar organizations to inform them of wildlife resources and outdoor wildlife learning opportunities.